Provision of STD/ISD/FAX Facilities in Villages

†146. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of villages in different parts of the country where Telephone/STD/ISD/FAX facility is still not available;

(b) by when these services would be provided to all these villages which are deprived of above facilities; and

(c) the effective steps are being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEELAHMAD): (a) As on 30-9-2005, 53,744 number of villages are remaining to be provided by Village Public Telephones (VPTs). This excludes villages having population less than 100, lying in thick forest areas/naxalite infested areas etc.

(b) These remaining villages be provided VPTs by November, 2007.

(c) To improve the rural connectivity, following steps have been taken:—

(i) Providing Village Telephones (VPTs) in a time bound manner in all the remaining uncovered villages having population less than 100 lying in thick forest areas/naxalite infrested areas etc;

(ii) Providing Rural Community Phones (RCPs) in a time bound manner in villages with population more than 2000 and where there are no PCO

(iii) Replacement of Multi Access Radio (MARR) VPTs;

(iv) Provision of individual rural phone connections (RDELs) on demand in 1,685 commercially unviable Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCAs) with support from USO Fund by January, 2006.

Spread of Broadband Policy

147. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has recently asked Government to accept its suggestions regarding the spread of broadband in the country;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.